

Information for bereaved families



SOUTH WALES
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INFORMATION FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

The Senior HM Coroners for South Wales and the Chief Constable for South Wales; realising the difficulties encountered at this sad time, will ensure that their appointed officers deal with matters as efficiently and timely as possible.

Why are the Police Involved?

Police officers attend all reports of sudden death on behalf of the coroner. They gather information to establish the circumstances of the death, and details of any witnesses and decide whether any further police investigation is required.

Once the police have completed their initial enquiries the case is forwarded to the Coroner's Office, the police officer dealing may need to carry out further enquiries, you can contact the police officer or the Coroner's Officers' with any queries.

Why is the Coroner Involved?

The Coroner may be involved because the death may be unexpected or the cause of death is unknown or unnatural or because the doctor cannot for any reason, issue a certificate of cause of death to the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer, who is required by law to enquire into the circumstances of a death. He/She has to establish the identity of the deceased, how, when and where they died.

Coroner's Officers can be contacted by telephone Monday to Friday between 08:00 am 3.30pm

South Wales Central Coronial Area
(which includes Cardiff & Vale, Bridgend & Rhondda Cynon Taff Area's)
Coroner's Office, Courthouse Street, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF37 1JW.
Telephone: **01443 281101**
Additional information can be found at **www.southwalescentralcoroner.co.uk**

Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot area
Coroner's Office, The Guildhall, Swansea, SA1 4PE. Telephone: **01792 450650**
Additional information can be found at **www.swansea.gov.uk/coroner**

What happens next?

Once the police have completed their initial enquiries, they will make arrangements for a funeral director to attend on behalf of the Coroner to take the deceased to a hospital mortuary.

Details for your information are provided below:

Occurrence No:	
Officer Details:	
Funeral Director contact Info:	

Hospital address:

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Please note: you are not under any obligation to use this funeral director to conduct any funeral arrangements and have no financial obligation towards the attending funeral director, who is paid by the Coroner for conveyance to the mortuary. If families do receive unsolicited requests, please bring to the attention of the Coroner. If they fail to attend within an hour please re-contact South Wales Police quoting the above incident Number. on 101.

Will the funeral be delayed?

The Coroner makes all efforts not to cause delay to the funeral. However, in a small number of cases, for example for legal reasons, delays may occur. In most cases however, the next of kin may contact a funeral director of their choice as soon as possible informing them that the Coroner is involved so that they can liaise with the Coroner's Office.

Why might a post mortem examination be required?

The Coroner may decide that a post mortem examination is required to establish a cause of death. It may be necessary for samples of blood and tissue to be taken for further testing to help establish a cause of death. The Coroner's Officer will inform the next of kin should this be necessary.

Can Organ Donation take place?

Organ donation may be able to take place after death providing time limits, the circumstances of the death and the medical history permit.

After the post mortem examination

If death is due to natural causes

In most cases, the cause of death is due to natural causes and if the Coroner decides that no further enquiries need to be made a document to the Registrar of Births and Deaths is issued and the death can be registered. A copy of the death certificate can be obtained from the relevant Registrar of Births and Deaths.

The Coroner's Officer will contact the next of kin to inform them of the cause of death and to provide advice regarding how to register the death and obtain a copy of the death certificate. They will also inform the funeral director who has been nominated by the next of kin to conduct the funeral, so that they can move the deceased to their chapel of rest.

Investigation

In some cases further investigation may be carried out. The Coroner will open an investigation and direct the Coroner's Officer in the case as to what further information is required. Depending on the complexity of the case this may take a matter of weeks or months. The Coroner's Officer will inform the next of kin as soon as possible to explain the procedure.

The Coroner will issue documentation to the funeral director so that the funeral can go ahead as planned. The Coroner can also provide "Interim Death Certificates" to the next of kin or executors for the purposes of administration of the deceased's estate.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the coroner will review the case. If no further action is required the coroner will discontinue the investigation and send documents to the Registrar of Births and Deaths so that the death can be registered. Next of Kin must then fulfil their legal obligation to register the death as soon as possible.

Inquest

In some cases the investigation will proceed to an Inquest which will be opened formally in court. It will then be adjourned to be heard at a later date on conclusion of all relevant enquiries.

At the conclusion of the inquest

The Coroner will send documents to the Registrar of Births and deaths. Thereafter next of kin will be able to make an appointment to obtain a copy of the death certificate from the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

How to obtain a copy of a death certificate

The death has to be registered in the area where the deceased died. Once the Registrar has received documentation from the Coroner, next of kin can then contact the relevant Registry office to make an appointment to register the death OR after Inquest obtain a copy of the death certificate.

Registry Offices: Monday - Friday by appointment only.

The contact details for each Registry Office responsible for your local area can be found on line and if in any doubt please seek the guidance of your Coroners Officer

Bereavement Support Services

National co-ordinating body for independent bereavement services who can offer help and advice to bereaved people Helpline Number: **020 7247 1080**

www.self-help.org.uk/directory/bereavement/

Following the sudden death of a young person aged 25 or under, Welsh charity:

2 Wish Upon A Star offers immediate and longer term bereavement support:

www.2wishuponastar.org

Email **Rachel.Williams@2wuas.cjsm.net** Telephone: Office **01443 853125**

or Mobile: **07833 528578** if urgent and out of hours.